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Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 24 July 2018

[*on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2018/L.26)*]

2018/26. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action, and recalling also the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[4] the Paris Agreement,[5] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[6]

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.
[2] Ibid., chap. II.
[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[4] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.
[5] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.
[6] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

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and the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),[7]

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 72/231 of 20 December 2017,

Recalling further its resolution 2017/28 of 25 July 2017 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and emphasizing the importance of its full and timely implementation,

Recognizing the synergies between the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;[8]

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further intensify their efforts to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments that have been made in the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] in its eight priority areas, namely, (a) productive capacity, (b) agriculture, food security and rural development, (c) trade, (d) commodities, (e) human and social development, (f) multiple crises and other emerging challenges, (g) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building and (h) good governance at all levels;

3. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

4. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and the inauguration of its headquarters in Gebze, Turkey, which signify the achievement of the first Sustainable Development Goal target, target 17.8, takes note with appreciation of the contributions that Turkey, Norway, the Sudan, Bangladesh and the Philippines have made, and invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to the Technology Bank to ensure its effective operation;

5. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development[4] in the least developed countries;

6. *Recognizes* that significant additional domestic public resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance as

[7] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.
[8] A/73/80-E/2018/58.

appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership, also recognizes that, while the least developed countries have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed, and underlines the importance of strengthening domestic enabling environments, including the rule of law and combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms;

7. *Also recognizes* that private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation, and that private international capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, along with a stable international financial system, are vital complements to national development efforts;

8. *Expresses its concern* that bilateral official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries remains far from the target set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, noting the reversal of the decline of ODA to the least developed countries in 2017 and expressing its appreciation to those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitments to 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing targets and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, calls upon ODA providers to fulfil their respective ODA commitments to the least developed countries, and encourages ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.2 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, while reiterating that an important use of international public finance, including official development assistance, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

9. *Reaffirms* that the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[9] and the outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and resolutions of the General Assembly, including through investing in the development of women and girls and promoting their economic and political participation and equal access to economic and productive resources and education, is of fundamental importance and has a multiplier effect for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development;

10. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution 67/221, and reiterates the request of the Assembly to the Committee for Development Policy to monitor the development progress of graduated countries, in consultation with the Governments of those countries, on a yearly basis for a period of three years after graduation becomes effective, and triennially thereafter, as a complement to two triennial reviews of the list of least developed countries, and to include its findings in its annual report to the Economic and Social Council;

11. *Also recalls* the recognition in the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020[10] of the importance of the reviews by the Committee for Development Policy of the graduation criteria for the least developed countries, and the recommendation in the Political Declaration that the reviews be comprehensive, taking into account all

[9] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[10] General Assembly resolution 70/294, annex.

aspects of the evolving international development context, including relevant agendas, and in this regard takes note of the decision of the Committee to implement a multi-year work programme for a comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria[11] and looks forward to its outcome;

12. *Reiterates* that wider recognition of least developed country status could stimulate and facilitate better integration of the Istanbul Programme of Action into development policies, and in this regard takes note of the survey conducted by the Committee for Development Policy to collect information on the recognition and application of the least developed country category by entities of the United Nations development system and the recommendations of the Committee;[12]

13. *Recalls* the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national and subnational levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

14. *Expresses its serious concern* at the fact that the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining and reached 46 per cent of total expenditures at the country level in 2016, compared with more than 50 per cent until 2014,[8] urges the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries by developing operational guidelines, while reaffirming that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced support to overcome structural challenges that they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requests the United Nations development system to provide assistance to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies and to consider country-specific support for graduated countries for a fixed period of time and in a predictable manner;

15. *Invites*, in this regard, the United Nations development system to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries by developing operational guidelines with clear budget targets, as appropriate;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its 2019 session, under the sub-item entitled "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020" of the item entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits", a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

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[11] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2017, Supplement No. 13* (E/2017/33), chap. I, sect. A, para. 12.

[12] Ibid., para. 5.